

# **Animal Health Safeguarding Review Implementation Progress Report October 2002**

## **I. Progress achieved in implementing the review:**

### Surveillance

- Wildlife disease surveillance – Wildlife Services is meeting with Mexican representatives the week of November 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss wildlife disease issues along the U.S.- Mexican border. Of particular interest are surveillance activities and collaborative efforts that could be put in place to monitor wildlife diseases. Later in November, Wildlife Services will be meeting with representatives from Texas A&M to discuss the possibility of establishing a research field station at the university to conduct research for wildlife diseases such as rabies, pseudorabies, and swine brucellosis that might be passed back and forth along the U.S.-Mexican border. Wildlife disease issues were the focus of numerous Safeguarding Review recommendations (#s 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, and 136).
- NAHRS steering committee holds annual meeting – The steering committee for the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS) held its annual meeting the week of September 30<sup>th</sup>. NAHRS is a joint effort of the USAHA, AAVLD, and USDA. NAHRS is one component of a comprehensive and integrated animal health information system. Safeguarding Review recommendation #98 called for strengthening the NAHRS system.

### Response

- Emergency response biosecurity guideline released – APHIS is in the process of preparing a suite of National Animal Health Emergency Management System guidelines. This suite of guidelines updates previous response plans and covers areas not dealt with in previous plans. In mid-October, draft Biosecurity guidelines were sent out for external review. (Draft Disposal and Appraisal and Compensation guidelines were sent out earlier this year). Several Safeguarding Review recommendations addressed the need for updated response guidelines (#s 107, 110).
- Vaccine discontinuance forum held – VS Center for Veterinary Biologics staff facilitated a forum during the USAHA/AAVLD meeting on vaccine discontinuance. The forum focused on collecting “points to consider” before a policy is developed for handling vaccines used in eradication programs. Twenty-eight persons representing VS, ARS, industry and academia attended. Safeguarding Review recommendation # 112 called for the development of a vaccination strategy for foreign animal diseases.

- Training sessions held on Personal Protective Equipment – Two training sessions on Personal Protective Equipment for Emergency Animal Disease Outbreaks were conducted at NVSL/NADC in Ames, Iowa the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>. A total of forty-four (44) participants attended the course which trained personnel to be able to evaluate a disease outbreak, determine the appropriate personal protective equipment, and understand how to utilize the required equipment. Participants included federal and state personnel, international representatives, and a representative from a state emergency management agency. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations address training needs for emergency response (#s 113, 114).
- After action review held for low pathogenic avian influenza response – Twenty-five state and federal personnel involved in the low pathogenic avian influenza task force met October 8-9<sup>th</sup> to review the experience. The group reviewed responses to questionnaires gathered from task force participants. The group identified a number of areas that went well and others that need improvement. An after action report was written to document the assessment. The VS Emergency Management Leadership Team will be proposing a number of recommendations to the VS Management Team to improve the process and institutionalize the successes. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations addressed the need to review and improve response strategies (#110, 111, 142)
- Conference on insurance for livestock diseases to be held in November – The VS Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health is cooperating with Colorado State University in sponsoring a conference on livestock disease insurance, November 5-7<sup>th</sup>. Information will be shared on several successful livestock disease insurance products being used in other countries. Speakers will be government officials, insurance industry experts, and academics. Safeguarding Review recommendation #148 calls for the development of comprehensive indemnity plans.

#### Exclusion

- Pathways analysis for Classical Swine Fever (CSF) - VS is collaborating with Kansas State University, Texas A&M University, and Purdue University to conduct a comprehensive pathways analysis for Classical Swine Fever (CSF). This analysis will also include an assessment of current surveillance activities. Knowledge gained from this assessment will be used to improve resource use for the rapid detection of CSF. Safeguarding Review recommendation #47 called for improved use of risk assessments
- Bird identification course held – The VS Professional Development Staff presented a course on bird identification to PPQ, VS, IES, and Fish and Wildlife staff. The course covered bird identification for smuggling as well as information on handling and movement of birds enroute to quarantine and information on avian zoonoses. Forty-five participants attended the course. Safeguarding

Review recommendation #s 43 and 46 address ensuring that personnel have sufficient training to carry out their inspection responsibilities.

- Sharing information on animal imports – All ports and border points have been given direction to inform AVICs and State Veterinarians of international movements of animals destined to their states. Safeguarding Review recommendation #81 discussed the need for this type of information to disseminated.

#### Laboratory System

- National Animal Health Laboratory Network developments – Five additional laboratories have been awarded contracts for CWD/TSE diagnostic testing (Connecticut, Kansas, Minnesota, South Dakota, and the University of California – San Bernadino). This brings the total number of contract labs to 15. Training for these new contract labs will be provided during the week of November 4<sup>th</sup>. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations point toward the establishment of a national animal health laboratory system (#s17, 74, and 121).
- Diagnostic test validation criteria drafted– Draft criteria have been developed for use in validating new diagnostic tests per an APHIS/ARS Memorandum of Understanding. Comments have been received and the document is in the process of being finalized. The draft criteria are being used to complete the validation of a real time PCR test developed by ARS. VS personnel have met with representatives of the Association of Official Analytical Chemists International on the need for harmonized validation criteria and standardized testing methods. Additional discussions will be held with this organization in late October/ early November. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations addressed the need for applied research to support response activities (#137 and 138).

#### Veterinary Accreditation

- Second focus group for Veterinary Accreditation Program held – The second focus group reviewing orientation and training needs for accredited veterinarians was held the week of October 28<sup>th</sup>. Safeguarding Review recommendations #s145, 146 and 147 call for revisions to the veterinary accreditation program.

#### Organizational Dynamics/Communication

- Career ladder created for animal caretakers – A new career ladder for animal caretakers has been established at the New York Animal Import Center. A leader position charged with supervision of weekend/ holiday animal caretaking crews was created. Safeguarding Review recommendation #65 called on APHIS to address key personnel issues including developing career pathways.

## Information Technology

- ePermits contract awarded – A contract was awarded at the end of September for the development of a Model Permit System for VS and PPQ. The model permit system is expected to meet E-government mandates and allow better tracking of animal and animal product movements. Safeguarding Review recommendation #81 called for better information dissemination on animal and animal product movements.
- Incorporating GIS – The VS Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health has begun the development of a GIS Internet Map Server to distribute spatial data. Information on tick populations in the United States and Equine Infectious Anemia will be the first data made available through this server. GIS capabilities are being incorporated into the Emergency Management Response System. The new GIS EMRS module has been delivered to CEAH for final testing and then will be made available to the VS task force in California. Safeguarding Review recommendation #129 encouraged better use of spatial data.

## **II. Implementation activities:**

Issue group leaders Roxanne Mullaney, Roger Odenweller, and Lynne Siegfried have been temporarily relieved of their AVIC duties so that they can focus on safeguarding implementation activities.

Members of the Veterinary Accreditation Issue Group attended the second focus group to be held on veterinary accreditation education and training. The session was held in Fort Collins the week of October 28th.

Members of the Information Technology Issue Group met with interested parties during USAHA to discuss several IT issues including the IT needs of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network.

The Surveillance Issue Group will be meeting November 5-7<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting the issue group will be identifying an overall implementation sequence including linkages and dependencies along with completing work on action plans for a number of safeguarding review recommendations.

The Exclusion Issue Group will be meeting the week of November 10<sup>th</sup> to continue their work on developing action plans.

The Coordinated Response Issue Group will meet the week of December 9<sup>th</sup> to continue work on draft action plans.

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*Comments and questions regarding this report can be directed to Carol Tuszynski at Area Code (970) 494-7320.*

